



Task Force Gator: Best Practices in Civil-Military Operations

by Steve Griffin

Buy your enemies or destroy them, but never make them a martyr. – Niccolò Machiavelli

American military activity throughout the past decade has forever changed global warfare. Conflicts during this period have focused primarily on counterinsurgency (COIN), a form of war intended to be ever-changing, multi-faceted, and complex. Within the military, efforts to overcome these conflicts have been unyielding and, often times, confusing. As a result, an improved, common interpretation of tactical operations has become paramount to future success. While the military typically handles the lethal operations within such conflicts, the responsibility to conduct nonlethal operations is more commonly shared with various other institutions. The distribution of information between the military, other government agencies, civilian leaders, and even the American population is essential to success in our current conflicts. Information flow is the linchpin between improved inter-governmental relations and informed strategic decision making. Additionally, in order to retain popular support, accurately informing the American public through the use of media outlets bears an equal, if not greater, importance.

One commonly used method of information sharing is through the retrospective dissemination of “best practices.” The deployment of Task Force (TF) 2-6, the “Gators,” to Salman Pak, Iraq in the spring of 2008 provides a germane example for this.¹ Throughout 14 months on the ground, valuable lessons were learned in both counterinsurgency and nonlethal tactics. The conditions in Salman Pak, the heart of what was once one of the most tumultuous areas of Iraq known as the “Sunni Triangle,” provided a unique atmosphere allowing for the polishing of these practices. Through close analysis, partner organizations, civilian leaders, and the media alike can capitalize on the successes and failures of the unit, achieving a greater understanding of civil-military operations for their future use.

Common Problems

“Counterinsurgency operations can be characterized as armed social work. It includes attempts to redress basic social and political problems while being shot at.”² Since civil-military operations are such a critical facet of COIN, it’s important for non-military parties to understand why units sometimes struggle with this element of a war. Initial friction may be attributed to an absence of formal training. Although each branch of the military does have specifically trained Civil Affairs specialists, many of the tactical-level Civil-Military Officers emerge from a combat arms background. They typically have little to no formal training in nonlethal operations and,

¹ 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, was commanded by then LTC Michael Shrout (2007-2009).

² U.S. Army Field Manual (FM) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office [GPO], December 2006), A-7.

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unless they possess an engineering degree, have no specialized civilian education either. A good example of this is the TF 2-6 nonlethal team, which consisted of an Armor officer, a Chemical officer, an Artillery officer, and a senior-enlisted Infantryman, none of which had any prior civil affairs training.

Lack of experience in this atypical genre of warfare may further contribute to a debilitated performance. In an environment where “dollars and ballots will have more important effects than bombs and bullets,” a dearth of previous COIN experience can make this facet of war even more daunting.³

Compounding both of these issues is an overarching apathy commonly associated with nonlethal operations. Most combat Soldiers train to kill their enemy, not to buy them with niceties. For lack of a better word, civil-military operations simply do not exude the “sexiness” that lethal operations tend to offer. This stigma can result in a sweeping reluctance and paucity of interest among Soldiers assigned to such billets.

Basic COIN Theory

To review, COIN is defined as “any military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civil actions taken by a government to defeat [an] insurgency.”⁴ Units must intend their COIN operations to *influence* the population by way of identified lines of effort in an attempt to achieve lasting changes. According to Dr. David Kilcullen, a leading expert on COIN, “counterinsurgency encompasses political, security, and economic tracks, with an underpinning information function (intelligence and ‘hearts and minds’) that integrate all the elements of a campaign.”⁵ In short, “during full spectrum operations, a complementary relationship exists between lethal and nonlethal actions.”⁶

In his book *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, David Galula describes how an insurgent’s actions are typically directed at the people. “The population, therefore, becomes the objective for the counterinsurgent as it [is] for his enemy.”⁷ Counterinsurgency units should focus on increasing the size of the population searching for a better future, that is, the side that coalesces with them. Far too many units mistakenly focus their efforts on containing a portion of the population who support the insurgency. Experienced COIN commanders at all levels can attest to this strategic miscalculation, a mistake that may keep a unit tunnel-visioned on the insurgent rather than the population.

³ Ibid., 1-27.

⁴ Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington D.C.: GPO, January 2010), 130.

⁵ David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* (New York: Oxford University Press, March 2009), 112.

⁶ U.S. Army Field Manual (FM) 3-90.6, *The Brigade Combat Team* (Washington D.C.: GPO, September 2010), 4-7.

⁷ David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 1964), 52.

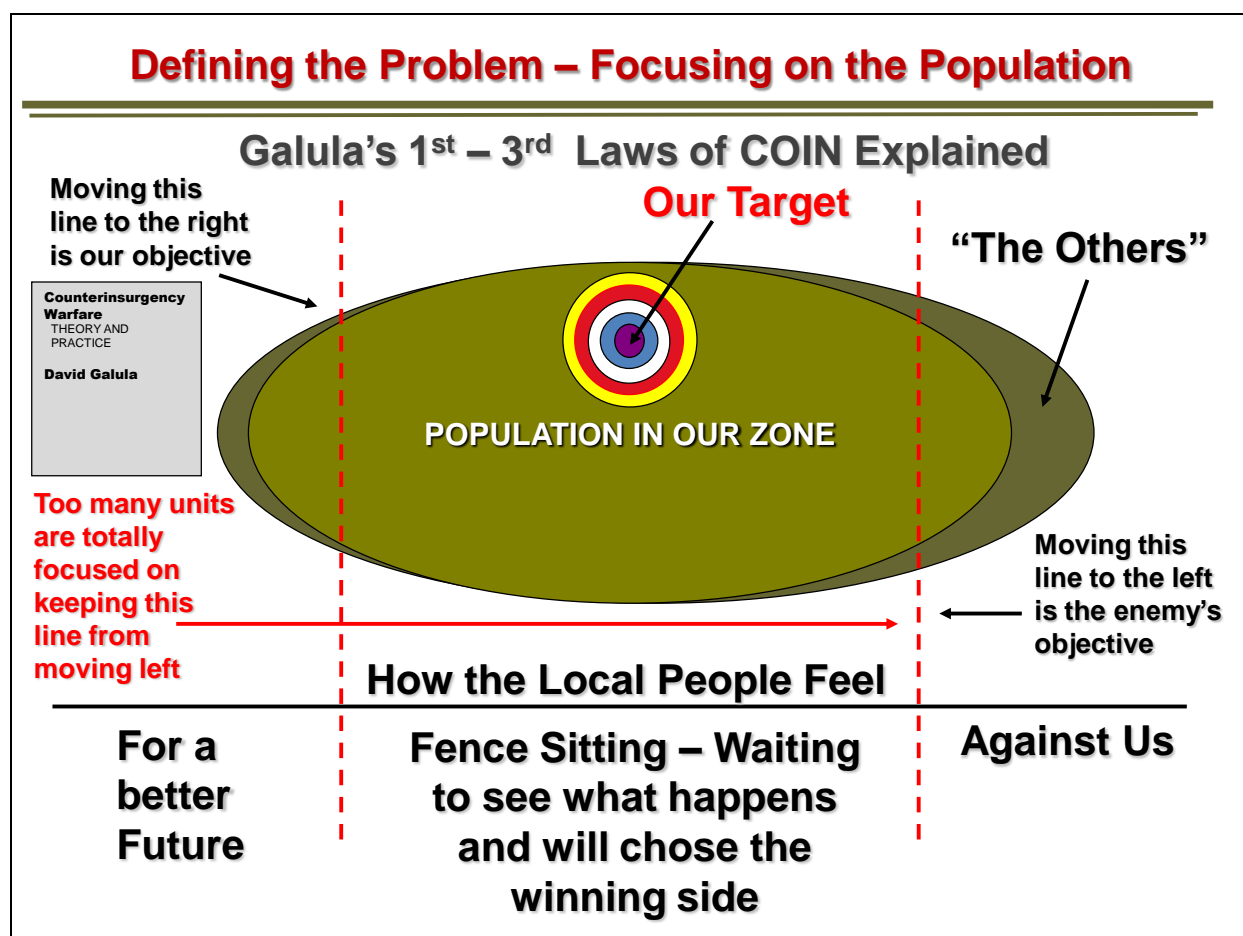


Figure 1 – COIN Theory Depicted⁸

In COIN, there are two principal theories of achieving influence over the population: the gratitude theory and the choice theory. The gratitude theory seeks to befriend the people, meet their needs, and in return, hopes that they will feel *grateful* and stop supporting the insurgency. Although this method may appear rational, in practice it simply fails to work. Kilcullen writes,

There is a belief, unfounded in reality, that development assistance generates gratitude, or 'hope,' in the population and thereby of itself encourages support [of] the government. Field experience in both Iraq and Afghanistan, however, has shown that insurgent intimidation easily overcomes any residual gratitude effect, and popular support tends to accrue to locally powerful actors rather than to those actors the population sees as more congenial: the more [powerful] a group is, the more likely it is to be able to enforce a system of rules and sanctions, giving the population the order and predictability it craves in the threatening, uncertain environment of insurgency.⁹

The alternate method, the choice theory, focuses on enabling the population, through persuasion and coercion, to make an *irrevocable* choice – us or them. This method typically

⁸ Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*. Figure created by LTC Michael Shrout, Commander, Task Force 2-6, 2nd BCT, 1st Armored Division (2007).

⁹ Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One*, 67.

works much better. Since the majority of the population naturally wants to “sit on the fence,” waiting to see who will prevail, this method forces those fence-sitters to choose a side and stay there. It requires persuading the population and then protecting them where they live. Again, Kilcullen states, “Counterinsurgency measures must be designed to help the population to choose between the government and the insurgent, and to enforce that choice once made.”¹⁰ This is where nonlethal operations play a pivotal role.

Doctrinally, the Clear-Build-Hold model is the U.S. military’s preferred strategy for counterinsurgency, its use predominately seen in both Iraq and Afghanistan.¹¹ Few may know, however, that this method was partially modeled after Galula’s 8-step counterinsurgency archetype. Applying this 8-step model as a guide, commanders can map out a plan for COIN campaigns, clearly conveying to their Soldiers the role civil-military operations will play. TF 2-6 studied this model for a full year prior to deploying to combat, holding weekly discussions with all leaders to achieve both understanding and buy-in of our plan.

Steps 5 – 8 of Galula’s model, which focus on change through *construction*, place nonlethal efforts first and foremost. Social transformation is achieved by concentrating on the reestablishment of government and rule of law, while rebuilding critical infrastructure. As Galula states, “[Steps 5 – 8] begins the constructive part of the counterinsurgent program. The objective of the counterinsurgent’s effort is to obtain the active support of the population, without which the insurgency cannot be liquidated.”¹²

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, 5-18.

¹² Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, 89.

Operational Design – Using Galula’s 8 Steps

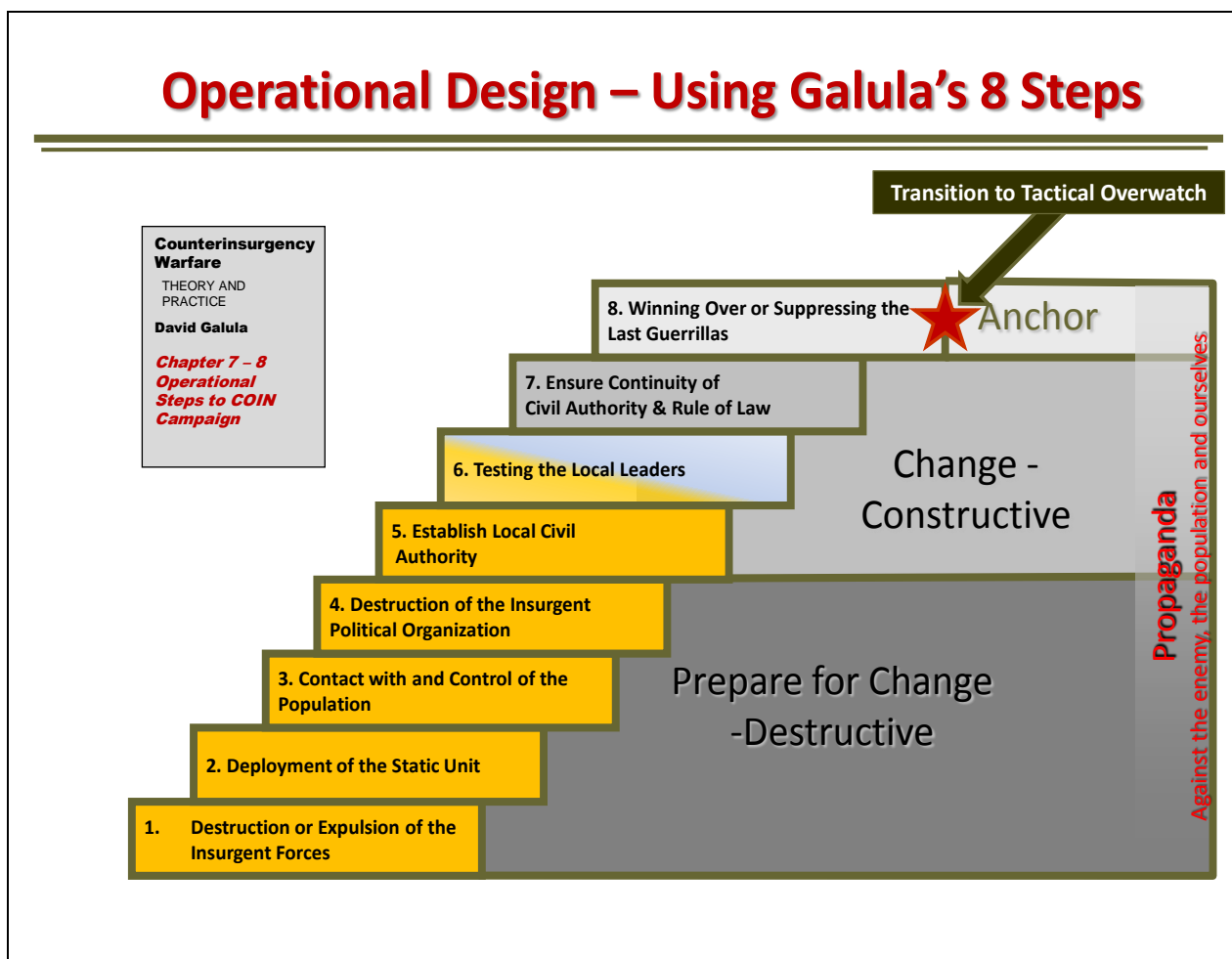


Figure 2 – Galula’s 8-Step Counterinsurgency Model¹³

The model’s first four steps attempt to purge insurgent forces through intelligence-driven raids, while at the same time gaining contact with the local populace. Step three, however, is when the first nonlethal operations may begin. In step three, “the counterinsurgent can at once start working on various projects in the economic, social, cultural, and medical fields, where results are not entirely dependent on the active cooperation from the population.”¹⁴ Steps five and six aim to establish legitimate governance by testing local leaders through infrastructure reconstruction and transfer of authority. Finally, steps seven and eight ensure continuity of the newly established civil authority while suppressing any residual insurgents.

Using this model, it is easy to see how civil-military operations in COIN are paramount to success. “Nonlethal actions expand the options available to commanders to achieve their objectives.”¹⁵ However, understanding the resources for these nonlethal effects is also critical. Beginning in November 2003, the U.S. Congress authorized funds for a Commanders Emergency Response Program (CERP) in both Iraq and Afghanistan. This seemingly bottomless coffer provides the majority of monies spent on reconstruction. Using these funds literally as a

¹³ Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*. Figure created by LTC Michael Shrout, Commander, Task Force 2-6, 2nd BCT, 1st Armored Division (2007).

¹⁴ Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, 84.

¹⁵ FM 3-90.6, *The Brigade Combat Team*, 4-7.

form of ammunition, commanders on the ground have come to realize that “lasting victory comes from a vibrant economy, political participation, and restored hope,” not just the number of enemy killed.¹⁶ However, money used as a “weapon system” must also be treated in the same manner, applying the same doctrinal principals that prudent combat leaders would apply to their rifles, machine guns, mortars, and artillery. In combat, fire superiority is achieved through a greater volume of fire *and* a greater accuracy of fire. When combined, these two elements result in effective suppression of the enemy. Likewise, when applied to “money as a weapon system” (MAAWS), fire superiority is not achieved by loosely throwing money at the population. Rather, well-placed and “aimed” projects in a judicious volume will achieve the effects commanders desire. As Roger Trinquier, a COIN theorist during the 1950s French-Algerian War, wrote, “Once peace has been established, extensive and generous social assistance will be of prime importance in bringing to our cause many people who are unhappy.”¹⁷

The Nonlethal Team

Commanders at nearly all echelons have a plethora of civil-military assets to draw upon in a COIN fracas. Most nonlethal operational planning and execution originates within the Civil-Military Operations Center (CMOC). “The CMOC serves as the primary center for synchronizing military operations with the operations of nonmilitary organizations.”¹⁸ The CMOC can have a variety of assets or enablers assigned to it, including both civilian and military-affiliated syndicates. Generally speaking, most CMOCs will employ a Civil-Military Officer (CMO), Project Purchasing Officer (PPO), Pay Agent (PA), Public Affairs Officer (PAO), Civil Affairs Team (CAT), and Psychological Operations Team (PSYOP).

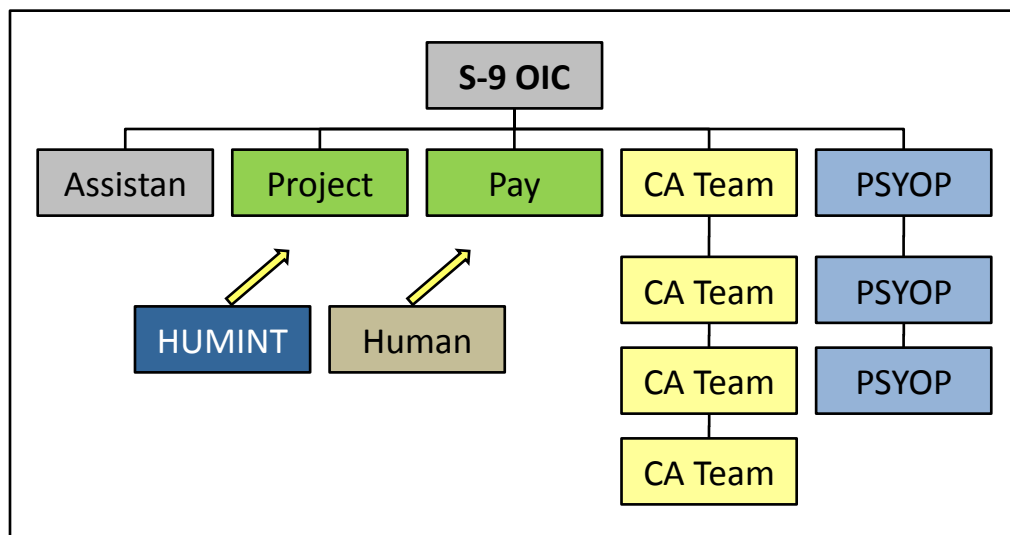


Figure 3 – TF 2-6 Civil-Military Operations Center (CMOC)¹⁹

¹⁶ FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, 1-27.

¹⁷ Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 1964), 42.

¹⁸ FM 3-90.6, *The Brigade Combat Team*, 8-15.

¹⁹ FM 3-90.6, *The Brigade Combat Team*, Figure 8-4.

“The Civil-Military Officer (CMO), or S-9, is the principal staff officer for all civil-military operations matters.”²⁰ He is the nexus for all civil-military operations. He shepherds assigned enablers, coordinates area assessments, and advises the commander on the effects of planned or ongoing nonlethal operations. Furthermore, the CMO is responsible for “coordinating, synchronizing, and integrating civil-military plans, programs, and policies [with the host nation].”²¹ As the TF 2-6 CMO, my duties were chiefly centered on updating the commander on all nonlethal operations across the battalion, negotiating new projects, monitoring ongoing projects, strategizing short and long-term goals, managing the nonlethal team, and representing Coalition Forces during host nation government meetings.

Enablers can also prove to be invaluable assets to a CMOC. The TF 2-6 Civil Affairs Team was used to conduct zone assessments and monitor projects, while the PSYOP Team was concurrently deployed as a daily information outlet to the populace, handing out fliers, battalion newsletters, and soccer balls. Partnerships with the Brigade Surgeon, Staff Judge Advocate General (JAG), and Human Terrain Team (HTT) were also leveraged to help assess essential services. Furthermore, working relationships with the Brigade’s embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team (ePRT), U.S. Aid for International Development (USAID), and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) were cultivated to bolster reconstruction efforts. These partner agencies can prove to be tremendous assets due to their alternate funding streams and additional manpower, again reinforcing the needs for a common operating picture and lateral information flow. Our team also used intelligence collection from an organic Human Intelligence Collection Team (HCT) to study and target key power brokers in the area. In the words of Dr. John Nagl, a modern-day COIN expert, “the control of information is strategically decisive in counterinsurgency.”²²

Project Types and Money Flow

Project types can vary from a simple road cleanup with a few workers to lengthy, complex vocational training programs for hundreds of local nationals. Before any project begins, however, the source of funding must be identified. Understanding the flow of money through funding streams can significantly untangle the bureaucratic web of project financing. Although there are several “colors” of money available, the most common type is the aforementioned CERP.

“The Commander’s Emergency Response Program (CERP) enables local commanders in Afghanistan and Iraq to respond with a nonlethal weapon to urgent, small-scale, humanitarian relief, and reconstruction projects and services that immediately assist the indigenous population.”²³ CERP projects are typically small-scale initiatives costing less than \$500,000. However, they can also be used for security measures. In 2008, the Sons of Iraq (SOI) program was the largest nonlethal project on the TF 2-6 financial books. Today, a smaller, congruent effort in Marja, Afghanistan, known as Interim Security for Critical Infrastructure (ISCI), similarly fits this mold.

²⁰ U.S. Army Field Manual (FM) 3-05.40, *Civil Affairs Organizations* (Washington D.C.: GPO, September 2006), 2-33.

²¹ Ibid.

²² John Nagl, *Foreword: Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006), ix.

²³ Center for Army Lessons Learned, *Commander’s Guide to Money as a Weapons System* (April 2009): 13, <http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/call/docs/09-27/09-27.pdf> (accessed January 15, 2011).

Our task force facilitated the flow of money down to the lowest level by decentralizing the project management process. Major reconstruction efforts costing in excess of \$15,000 were reserved for battalion oversight, managed directly by the CMO. However, micro-enterprises such as street cleanups, well repairs, and humanitarian assistance were pushed down to the companies, where each commander had a qualified PPO and PA at his disposal. This structure was also maintained during the battalion's micro grant surge, an operation used to invigorate economic growth. Micro grants are an extremely pliable form of financial assistance that, if used correctly, can effectively stimulate a local economy. The Gator micro grant surge focused on quality, not quantity, with each grant being heavily vetted and in-kind grants issued when possible. Follow-up assessments were subsequently conducted by company representatives to ensure the money was being used as intended. If economic conditions on the ground are ripe, micro grants can be a counterinsurgent's silver bullet that transforms a local market from floundering to flourishing.

Establishing Lines of Effort

COIN campaigns are generally centered on Logical Lines of Operations (LLO), also known as Lines of Effort (LOE). "Lines of effort are used to visualize, describe and direct operations when positional references to an adversary have little reference, as in a counterinsurgency."²⁴ Although LOEs should not be viewed as sequential "road maps" to success, commanders can develop tactical missions, allocate resources, and assess operations through their use. In fact, LOEs are best executed in harmony with each other, as opposed to in sequence. "Neglecting objectives along one LOE [by focusing on the others] risks creating vulnerable conditions which insurgents can exploit."²⁵ As the situation on the ground changes, commanders often modify lines of effort to match tactical demands. For example, once a legitimate government council was formed, TF 2-6 shifted focus from a government LOE to an economic LOE through the use of a micro grant surge operation.

Of the six COIN LOEs – establish civil security, establish civil control, support host nation security forces, support governance, restore essential services, and support economic/infrastructure development – the latter three are primarily influenced through nonlethal operations. As a result, the Gator nonlethal team focused the preponderance of its attention in these areas.

The "support to governance" LOE, from a civil-military point of view, is arguably the most important line of effort. Without a stable government in place, all other efforts to improve essential services, infrastructure, or the economy could be easily jeopardized. In addition, "the formation of an effective local government is critical to the success of any counterinsurgency operation because [it] provides the foundation for legitimate governance at the national level."²⁶ TF 2-6 efforts to dissolve a corrupt, defunct government council lasted over six months but resulted in the reseating of a more efficacious body, permitting a transition from governance to economic recovery.

Restoring essential services is generally the next logical priority. "Essential services address the basic life support needs of the population."²⁷ They include many mundane but

²⁴ U.S. Army Field Manual (FM) 3-24.2, *Tactics in Counterinsurgency* (Washington D.C.: GPO, April 2009), 4-6.

²⁵ FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, 5-6.

²⁶ FM 3-24.2, *Tactics in Counterinsurgency*, 7-15.

²⁷ FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, 5-14.

critical components of a society such as functioning schools, health care, utilities and sewage. In a kinetic, unstable environment, the counterinsurgent might be the only authority capable of providing these functions. However, due to obvious fiscal limitations, doing so could turn out to be a calamitous misstep. All efforts should be made to discourage the attitude that the counterinsurgent has arrived to “save the day.” “If lofty goals are set and not achieved, both the counterinsurgent and the host nation government can lose the populace’s respect.”²⁸ For example, after completing a \$1.5 million hospital refurbishment project, the Salman Pak Nahia Council expected TF 2-6 to restore all other local clinics as well, a task we had no inclination of fulfilling on our own. As a guide, the Gator nonlethal team defined essential services using the acronym “SWEAT-MSO”; **Figure 4** depicts a sample list of these services and their respective end state.

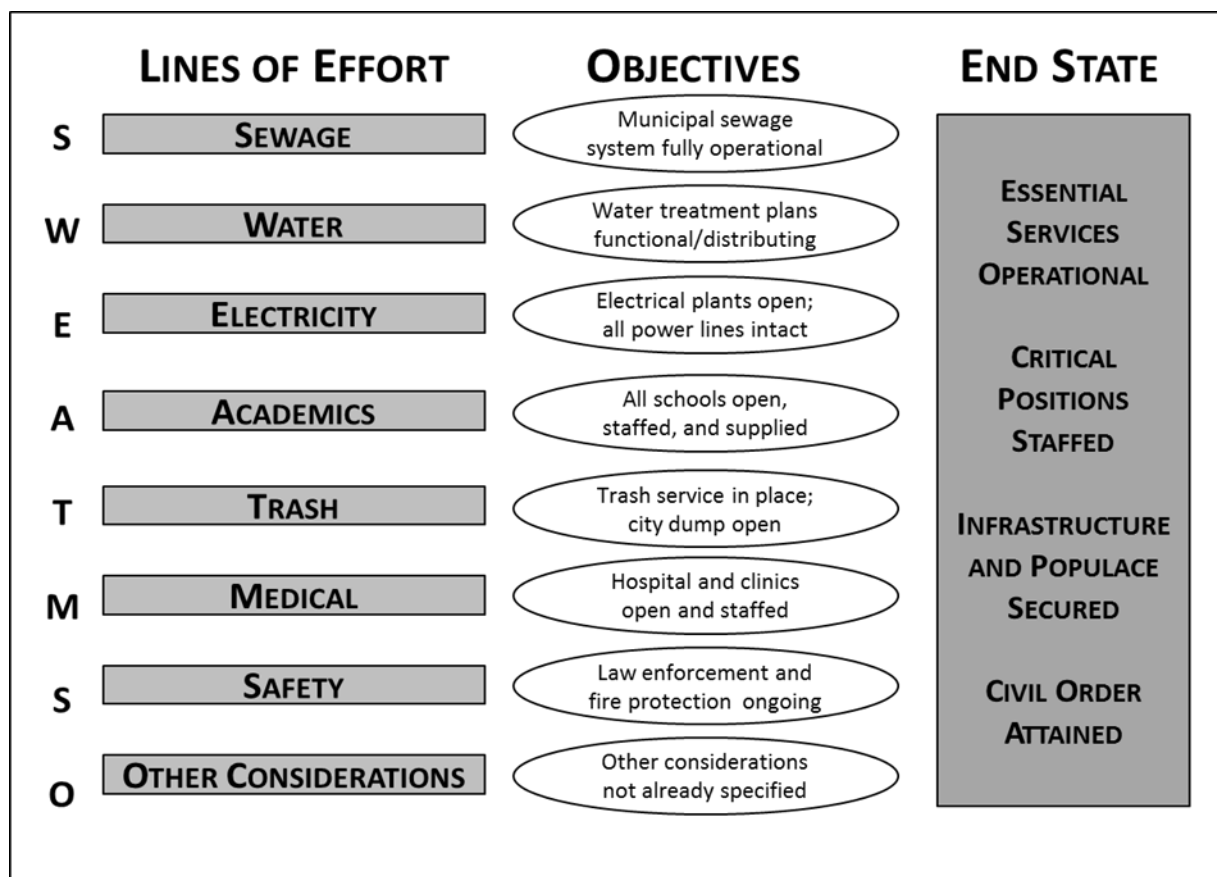


Figure 4 – Example Essential Services Line of Effort Using “SWEAT-MSO”²⁹

The third priority, economic support, can be just as imperative as the first two. Economic and infrastructure development are the building blocks that can propel a society out of post-conflict lifelessness and into an effusive market economy. The TF 2-6 nonlethal team broke this effort down into two aspects – short and long-term efforts. “The short-term aspect concerns immediate problems, such as large-scale unemployment and reestablishing an economy. The

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ U.S. Army Field Manual (FM) 3-07, *Stability Operations* (Washington D.C.: GPO, October 2008), Figure 4-2.

long-term aspect involves stimulating indigenous, robust, and broad economic activity.”³⁰ To achieve this, efforts included projects to rebuild critical infrastructure, micro grants to jump start small businesses, agricultural unions to cultivate husbandry, as well as massive road clean ups to facilitate transportation. Moreover, the importance of reestablishing banks and loaning institutions cannot be overstated. Without a ready source of capital available to the public, no amount of effort from a unit can adequately stimulate an economy to meet host nation expectations.

This LOE also poses an excellent opportunity to engender vocational training programs. Although highly effective, planners should be wary of the encumbrance inherited with ending or “off-ramping” such prospects once complete. TF 2-6 inherited a \$5.6 million “Civil Service Corps” program designed to train local laborers in general construction skills. As a consequence of the monthly paycheck it provided, the task force then spent six months trying to find jobs for these students in order to end the program without any feelings of abandonment.

Finally, throughout every effort, every project, and every action, there should be a corresponding information operation (IO) to compliment it. “By publicizing government policies, the actual situation, and counterinsurgent accomplishments, IO, synchronized with public affairs, can neutralize insurgent propaganda and false claims.”³¹ The end state is simply to shape the public’s expectations for them. TF 2-6 effectively achieved this through highly publicized ribbon-cutting ceremonies, distribution of a monthly newsletter, countless key leader engagements, and even a local radio program.

The Nonlethal Targeting Cycle

“Targeting is the process of selecting and prioritizing targets and matching the appropriate response to them, considering operational requirements and capabilities.”³² In this case, nonlethal targeting is aimed at gaining support from the population by winning “hearts and minds.” While lethal targeting uses combat operations, specifically maneuver and firepower, to *destroy*, nonlethal targeting uses civil-military operations, specifically IO and nonlethal effects, to *influence*. The neutral population is the nonlethal target.

Since both lethal and nonlethal techniques are used in COIN, there is often debate if they should be planned and executed in parallel or in series. The Army’s Operational Concept, the core of our doctrine, fashions the employment of forces in terms of simultaneous offensive, defensive, and stability operations. This translates to tactical units executing all three operations during every phase of every mission. Gone are the days when operations were separated by phases (e.g. attack, consolidate/reorganize, transition, and stability). In both Iraq and Afghanistan, commanders have approached this volition in two ways. Some prefer to separate the two out into separate, parallel staff processes. This allows them to think through actions more thoroughly and better focus their efforts and limited assets on more exact criteria. Conversely, TF 2-6 opted to merge the two processes, planning and executing both operations at the same time. We pursued the process in a more holistic approach, viewing them as something

³⁰ FM 3-24.2, *Tactics in Counterinsurgency*, 4-9.

³¹ FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, 5-8.

³² Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Joint Operations* (Washington D.C.: GPO, March 2010), III-18.

that could not be separated. As Kilcullen writes, “careful cueing of security operations [is necessary] to support development and governance activities, and vice versa.”³³

The conventional targeting process, initially intended for high intensity conflicts, has only four steps – Decide, Detect, Deliver, and Assess (D3A). However, subsets of this process have also evolved over time. The Civil Affairs method includes six steps – Assess, Decide, Develop/Detect, Deliver, Evaluate, and Transition – while the COIN method adheres to the D3A four-step process. The TF 2-6 leadership decided that the targeting process in COIN needed more time to develop than traditional operations. As a result, a five step method was adopted – Decide, Detect, Track, Deliver, and Assess (D3TA).

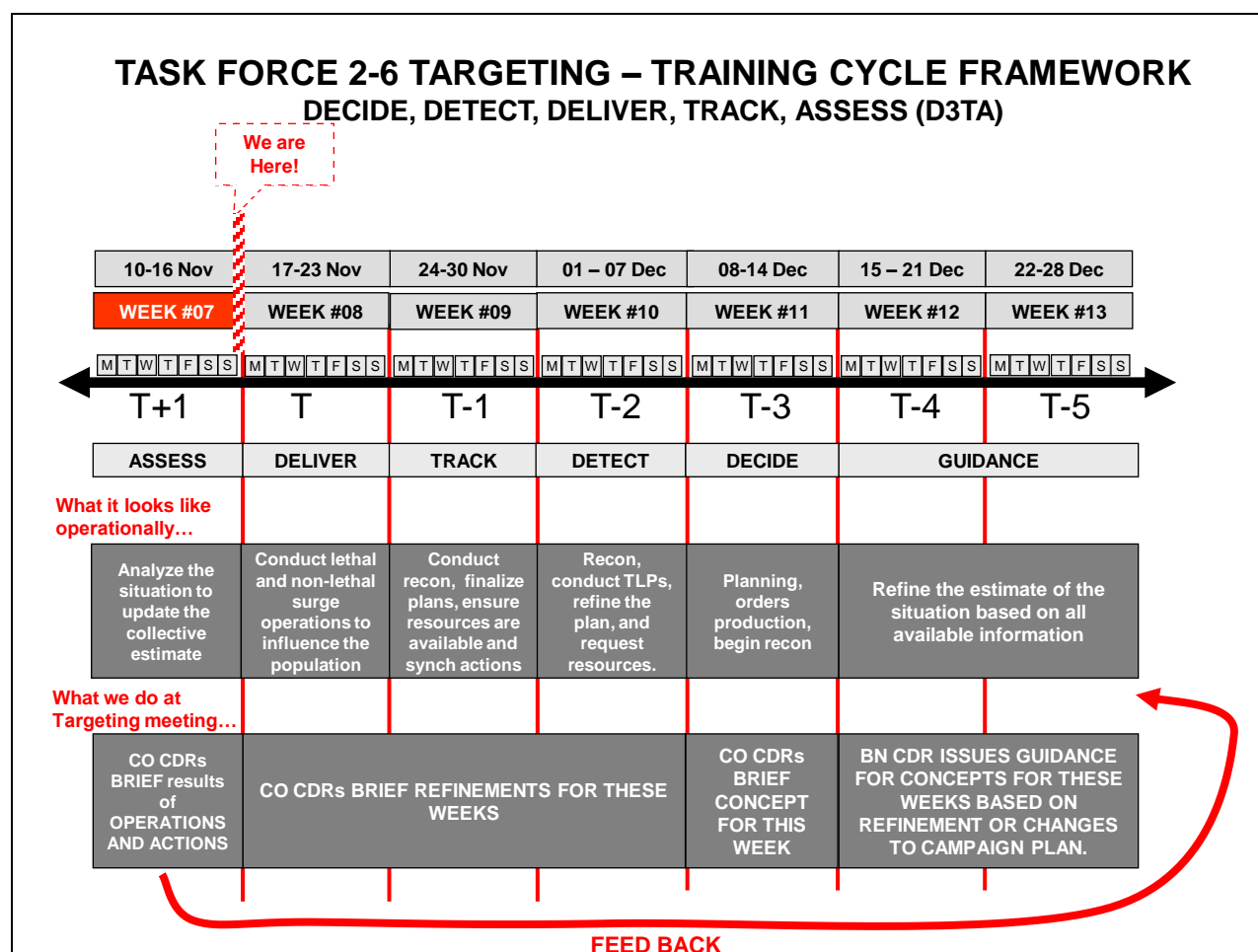


Figure 5 – TF 2-6 D3TA Example Framework³⁴

The first step, the Decide phase, actually occurs last in the chronological sequence. This step draws upon detailed intelligence and refined assessments of conditions on the ground, each determined during the Assess phase. In conjunction with operations and intelligence sections,

³³ Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One*, 112.

³⁴ Figure created by LTC Michael Shrout, Commander, Task Force 2-6, 2nd BCT, 1st Armored Division, LTC Michael Shrout (2007).

the CMO analyzes staff assessments in order to advise commanders of potential targets. Partially driven by previously identified LOEs, the option to deliver on these targets is ultimately the commander's decision. The nonlethal team prioritizes a list of targets, develops the high payoff target list (HPTL), and recommends a course of action for each one. Once targets are decided, the CMOC plans cell develops a viable plan to execute each mission.

When TF 2-6 first arrive in Salman Pak, one of the foremost priorities was to conduct a thorough zone reconnaissance. Some tacticians might consider this initial assessment as part of the Assess phase. However, due to its non-continuous nature, the Gator team included this first reconnaissance as part of the Decide phase. The team approached this assessment using the mnemonic "ASCOPE" – Areas, Structures, Capabilities, Organizations, People, and Events.³⁵ By applying these attributes to each of the operational variables of Political, Military, Economic, Social, Information, and Infrastructure, plus Physical Environment and Time (PMESII-PT), we were able to produce comprehensive data to help guide the unit's civil-military campaign plan.³⁶

Once targets are decided, the next step is the Detect them. This phase is performed continuously, in which the nonlethal team must analyze all sources of intelligence to determine threat validity, importance of potential targets, best method of engagement, and anticipated effects of engaging a target. From a civil-military standpoint, threat validity boils down to how destitute one LOE is over the others. TF 2-6 derived the importance of various targets through the use of a standard business practice – which target had the largest return on investment. Methods of engagement were determined by identifying the assets available (e.g. CERP funds, information engagement, etc.), and then selecting which method would achieve the preferred effect in accordance with the commander's desired end state. Finally, predicting the effects of an engaged target is commonly the most difficult part of target detection. To combat this, the nonlethal team used the "PreMortem" or "Crystal Ball" technique in which we attempted to brainstorm all of the ways in which an operation could have a negative effect on a target and then record and weigh the drawbacks of each one prior to execution.³⁷

The proceeding step, Track, simply adds another week (or otherwise determined segment of time) for additional target preparation. This step allowed us accessory time to maintain contact with key leaders of high priority targets. In turn, it placed a greater demand on our intelligence assets and Civil Affairs Team to provide an "unblinking eye" to both fixed and moving targets. Continuation of reconnaissance, finalization of the plan, and synching with simultaneous operations were all key tasks during this phase.

"The Deliver phase involves executing the missions decided upon by the commander."³⁸ For the nonlethal team, this meant execution of CERP projects from start to finish, introduction of a micro grant initiative, or simply key leader engagements to influence local government officials and tribal elders.

Finally, once execution has commenced, the Assess phase also begins. This phase should occur continuously throughout any operation in order to regularly evaluate progress. The Assess

³⁵ FM 3-24.2, *Tactics in Counterinsurgency*, 1-8.

³⁶ FM 3-90.6, *The Brigade Combat Team*, 4-10.

³⁷ For notes on the PreMortem technique, see Gary Klein, *Streetlights and Shadows: Searching for the Keys to Adaptive Decision Making* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009), 63; For notes on the Chrystal Ball technique, see Marvin Cohen, Jared Freeman, and Bryan Thompson, "Training the Naturalistic Decision Maker," *Naturalistic Decision Making*, eds. Caroline Zsombok and Gary Klein (Norwood, NJ: Ablex Press, 1997), 2.

³⁸ FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, 5-30.

phase is critical in COIN. Instead of simply doing a battle-damage assessment, our nonlethal team had to anticipate the reaction of key groups, as well as pinpoint any second and third order effects. The team used two cardinal measurement tools to help assess nonlethal operations – Measures of Performance (MOP) and Measures of Effectiveness (MOE). “MOP answers the question ‘Are we doing things right?’”, while “MOE answers the question, ‘Are we doing the right things?’”³⁹ Both criteria were used to determine if the commander’s directives were executed as intended while achieving progress toward a desired effect. However, as we discovered, depicting these assessments can prove to be difficult. **Figure 6** shows a popular tool the task force used to assess itself during weekly targeting meetings.

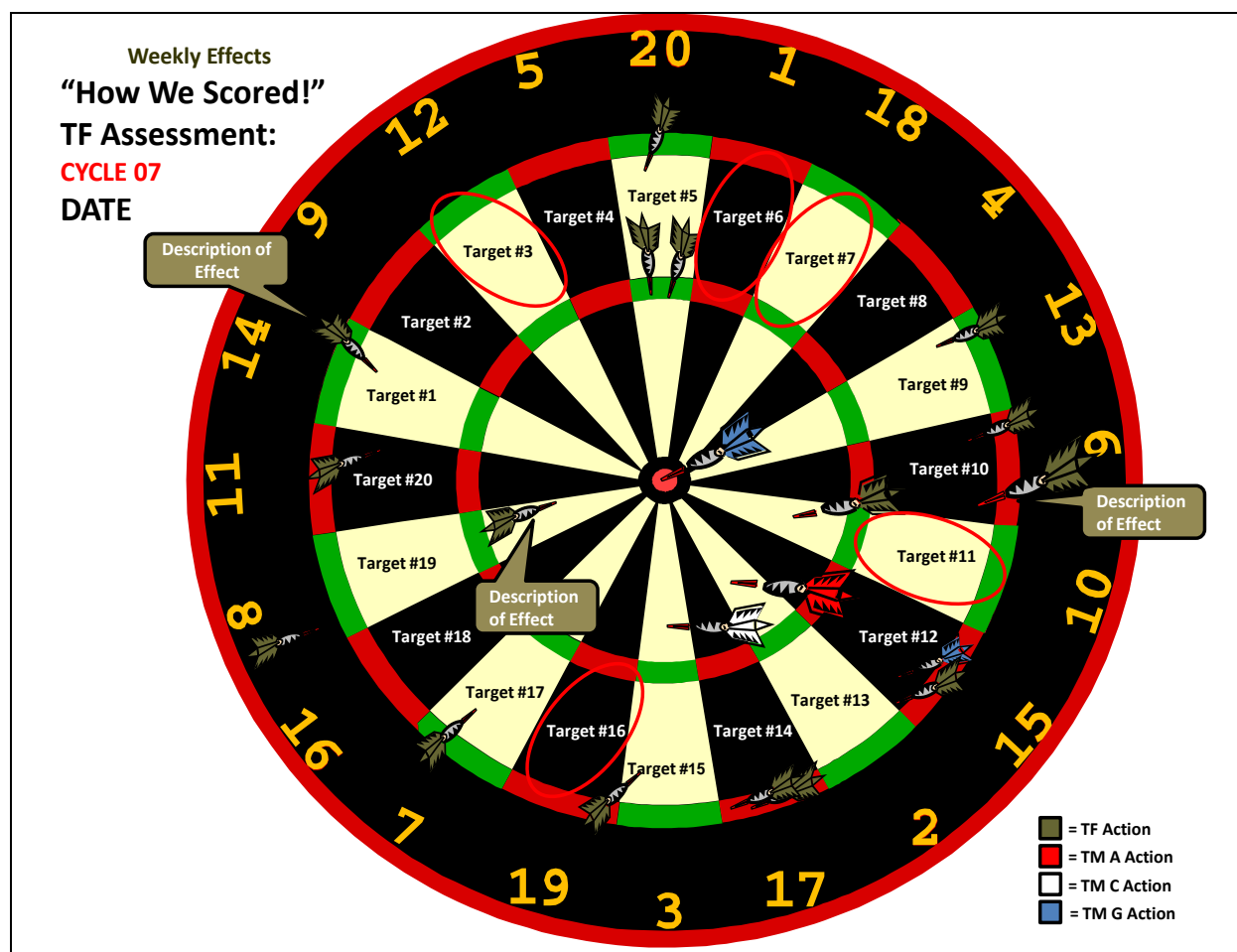


Figure 6 – TF 2-6 Assess Phase “Dart Board”⁴⁰

³⁹ For Measures of Performance see U.S. Army Field Manual (FM) 3-60, *The Targeting Process* (Washington D.C.: GPO, November 2010), 2-23; for Measures of Effectiveness see *Ibid.*, 2-24.

⁴⁰ Figure created by LTC Michael Shrout, Commander, Task Force 2-6, 2nd BCT, 1st Armored Division, LTC Michael Shrout (2008).

Project Selection

To delineate the Decide phase of the targeting process even further, the task of project selection can often be more complex than anticipated. “When used effectively, and with an end state in mind, money can be an effective means to mobilize public support for the counterinsurgent’s cause and further alienate the insurgents from the population.”⁴¹ However, deciding exactly where to use this medium should be dependent on more than just lines of effort.

Project selection should always take into consideration the following principals: host nation ownership, capacity building, sustainability, selectivity, assessment, results, partnership, flexibility, and accountability. Coincidentally, these principles also nest within the USAID project selection criteria, further facilitating cross-agency cooperation and partnership.

Throughout 14 months on the ground, TF 2-6 generally favored small-scale projects over large ones. Although large projects can potentially reach a greater number of people at once, they are also more susceptible to graft due to their large price tags. Through greater volume, small projects can touch a larger constituency of the population over time while simultaneously employing more workers. For TF 2-6, more projects resulted in more interaction with the population, thus increasing the flow of actionable intelligence. As we learned firsthand, a micro grant initiative can easily achieve these sudden windfalls. However, depending on the size of its staff, managing too many projects at once can quickly overwhelm a unit. To combat this, our nonlethal team always operated under the mantra that if a project could not be properly managed, then we did not fund it.

Along the same line, nonlethal teams should always ensure their projects meet the people’s fundamental needs. In Salman Pak, a former tourist-centric economy, the city council incessantly besieged our task force commander with requests to refurbish tourist attractions and even build an amusement park. We instead decided that clean drinking water held precedence over Ferris wheels. Furthermore, the use of local contractors invariably generates new employment opportunities, satisfying a ubiquitous need for work commonly found in war stressed areas. To achieve this, our nonlethal team worked with local officials to establish an unemployment office, which in turn was mandated as a labor pool for all new projects. By forcing contractors to use this as a source of labor, coalition money was kept out of the large Baghdad corporations and instead infused back into the local economy.

Conclusion

Ultimately, TF 2-6 achieved significant results in the Sunni Triangle by positively influencing the population through the use of civil-military operations. These operations set the conditions to draw the population in and force uncommitted “fence sitters” to choose a side. To achieve this, our team required an in-depth understanding of COIN theory while also deducing how nonlethal actions could have both positive and negative effects on a target. Furthermore, through a clear understanding of the various project types, funding streams, and available force enablers, our nonlethal team was able to achieve poignant and lasting effects. The streamlining and socialization of a five-step targeting process to identify, scrutinize, and deliver on nonlethal targets was equally key to our strategy.

⁴¹ FM 3-24.2, *Tactics in Counterinsurgency*, 7-25.

Partnering agencies, civilian leaders, and the media can each benefit from these hard learned lessons. By utilizing these practices, stronger partnerships with military units and improved strategic decision making can be achieved. Furthermore, though a clearer understanding of military COIN operations, media outlets can more accurately depict these Spartan efforts to their audience, the American public.

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